Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: August 22, 2006
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – Interior Associate Deputy Secretary James E. Cason today announced that the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) has published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding tribal energy resource agreements (TERAs) designated under Title V, Section 503, of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 in the August 21, 2006, issue of the Federal Register. TERAs offer federally recognized tribes a new alternative for overseeing and managing energy and mineral resource development on their lands: the authority to enter into energy-related business agreements and leases and for granting rights-of-way for pipelines, electric transmission and distribution lines.

"To foster economic development within Indian country and to promote energy self-sufficiency by tribes, I am delighted to make public proposed regulations for tribal energy resource agreements," Cason said. "TERAs will bring efficiency to the tribal energy resource development process, enhance tribal self-determination and improve economic development opportunities on tribal lands while supporting the administration's National Energy Policy to increase use of domestic energy resources."

The proposed rule is intended to provide a process under which the Secretary would grant authority to a tribe through an approved TERA to review and approve leases, business agreements and rights-of-way for specific energy development activities on tribal lands. Currently, tribes must first seek secretarial approval of such actions through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

The Department is seeking comments on the proposed regulations from all stakeholders. The 30-day comment period for the proposed rule ends September 20, 2006. Comments must include Regulatory Information Number (1076-AE80) and a contact name and return address. Comments may be submitted to DOI in any of the following ways:

- By email at IEED@bia.edu
- By telefax at (202) 208-4564, or
- By mail or hand-delivery to: U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 20–South Interior Building, Washington, D.C. 20245.

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development was established to provide high-level support for the Department's goal of serving tribal communities by providing access to energy resources and helping tribes stimulate job creation and economic development, and supporting the President's National Energy Policy by fostering development of domestic energy resources to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign energy sources.

Questions concerning this proposed rule may be directed to (202) 219-0740. All public comments received will be reviewed and considered before the proposed rule is finalized.

-DOI-